

Always In Motion by thelastflightshome

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Summary:

“You’re wild.” “And you’re plastered. Be quiet, wastoid.” “Wastoid? Like from The Breakfast Club? Andy called Bender that.”

the party goes to a party in the summer of 1987.

Always In Motion

Author's Note:

this is my first stranger things fic! hope you enjoy.

1987. The past year had been a weird one. Not weird in a crazy government lab kind of way, but in a just normal life kind of way. The party remained mostly the same, but they had a few family changes.

Starting with our hero protagonist, Mike. His parents had split, yet, remained in the same house 'for the kids.' which made the whole thing even stranger. Nancy was nearing 20 (or maybe she already was, but, Mike couldn't keep up with her) and still at home. She wasn't in college, not working either. After Steve had left for Indiana State and Jonathan left for NYU, she seemed to lose her sense of direction and planted herself permanently on the couch.

With Jonathan gone, Joyce's only worry was Will, who wasn't falling apart as badly as everyone thought he was. He visited a therapist twice a week now and he seemed to be working through his worried mind. Joyce and Hopper were closer than ever, but Will wouldn't disclose whether they were dating or not. In a weird way, that made Eleven -- *Jane* -- Will's sort of step sister.

Jane, she still made Mike's heart skip a beat. To him, she'd always be Eleven. She had broken his heart, unintentionally, their sophomore year of school. Well, his sophomore year. It was too hard for her to attend school, since she had never attended once in her life. She struggled in the public atmosphere, no matter how hard the party tried to help her. Eleven just wasn't like the rest of them. Of course, they still saw her every once in a while, but she didn't reside in Hawkins anymore. She worked and lived better in a private facility.

The party were all currently sixteen, Lucas was nearing seventeen. It was the summer before senior year, only a few weeks left before their schooling began. The fact they were at one of Troy Harrington's kegger party wasn't the weirdest thing they had encountered. No, they weren't 'popular' or anything like that now. But Lucas had

become sort of friends with the guy during basketball and therefore the party had been invited to all the parties. *Everybody* wanted to be friends with the black kid who played basketball. The only member who had joined their party recently was his girlfriend, a new girl named Jacee. She wasn't **really** a member. She just hung around them for Lucas.

Max had driven the party to the party in her green Jeep, which they had all squished in. She was the designated driver, as she always was. Max wasn't at all a drinker, as she had seen how badly they increased her step brother's already abusive behavior. (In case you were wondering, Billy lived right on the edge of town and worked at a mechanic's shop. Last Max had heard from him, he said he was shacking up with a Southern girl named Angela. Sometimes he left Max drunk voicemails, which were always left unresponded to)

Sometimes, most of the time, the the boys drank just enough to break out of their shells. Lucas, after chugging a beer with Dustin, had taken Jacee's hand and led her onto the makeshift dance floor with a grin. Dustin, always down to dance, had joined them. That left Mike with Will and Max. Mike had warmed up to Max over the years, even if they could get snarky with each other. Max was still a tom-boy, her tight jeans and Twisted Sister t-shirt paired with checkered Vans proved it. She still skated, though, she mostly drive.

"This music sucks." She declared, leaning against a kitchen counter, pushing her fiery red hair behind her ear. "Compared to what? Blondie and The Sex Pistols?" Mike asked, pouring himself a drink and then one for Will. "They're better than this Duran-Duran shit." Max grinned, knowing it would bug Mike due to his love of synth bands, like Devo and Depeche Mode.

Leave it to Will, finishing off his shot with a disgusted face, to be the peacemaker. "Duran-Duran is at the top 100 Billboard charts right now. You know they've gotta be good if they're up there." He said, shrugging before speaking again. "Jonathan saw Blondie last week. He - He said they were really good." Will smiled up at Max, then at Mike. Mike rolled his eyes. "He's probably only saying that 'cause Debbie Harry is hot." Mike insisted. "And not because she makes awesome music?" Max challenged. Mike was going to need another drink if they were going to keep this up.

“Cause she’s got awesome boobs! Who gives a shit if she’s a good singer?” Mike threw back another shot. “At least she makes real music. All your robot bands do is press buttons on a machine and call it a song.” Max stood on her toes, staring up at Mike from the distance they had between them. Will found some jello shots on the kitchen table, pulling himself from the bickering teenagers for a good few minutes.

Mike had opened his mouth to argue back with Max before he stopped, squinting at her. “What? Can’t argue against that, huh? You know I’m always right about these things --” Max started before he cut her off. “You’re wearing makeup.” He noted. Max turned away. “No! I mean, uh, just a little. I don’t care if you don’t like it, okay? I don’t wear it for you, so if you’ve got something shitty to say, you could keep it to yourself --” She got defensive, letting her hair fall into her face, her angled bangs falling to shield her white eyeshadow covered eyelids.

“It looks pretty.” Will told her. “Uh, it looks okay.” Mike added, not able to compliment her for the life of him. Max stared, shaking her head after. “Thanks, asshole.” She mumbled.

“Max! Max, you’ve got to dance with us!” Jacee was back in the kitchen, her long dark voils bouncing as she grabbed onto Max’s arm. “Fine.” Max decided, bracing a smile for the other girl before she let her drag her off. She needed a break from the boys anyway.

“Hey Mike.” Will’s voice was forever soft and gentle, tentative. “Yeah?” Mike watched the girls go off, eyes pulling back to look down at Will.

“I feel kinda dizzy. Do you think I could go lay down?” Somebody always ended up taking care of Will at parties. He just couldn’t handle his alcohol. This time, Mike was going to babysit.

“How much did you drink, Will? We’ve only been here for like, half an hour.” Mike wrapped an arm around Will’s shoulders, leading him out of the semi-crowded kitchen and into the heavily crowded living room. “Like, one shot of what you gave me, then some of those jello things.” Will answered, leaning into Mike as they pushed through into the hallway. Mike opened doors (interrupting party goers each

time) until he found an empty bedroom.

"You must've drank them too soon." Mike suggested, helping Will lay on the bed. It must've been Steve's old bedroom. It looked like it. Or how Nancy had described it in her diary.

The truth was that no matter how little or how much Will drank, it went right to his head. "Thanks, Mike." Will rested his head on the pillow, closing his hazel eyes.

"God, the room is spinning. I feel like I'm on a ship." He complained. Mike sat on the edge of the bed, smiling weakly. "Captain Will Byers and Navigator Mike Wheeler reporting for duty." Mike joked, watching Will giggle a little. "You're wild." Will told him. "And you're plastered. Be quiet, wastoid." Mike said, shifting more onto the bed so he could rest his back against the wall.

"Wastoid? Like from The Breakfast Club? Andy called Bender that." Will recalled. He always remembered the weirdest stuff from movies.

"Oh, yeah. I guess you're right." Mike didn't even realize it. "We're kind of like The Breakfast Club, don't you think?" Will went on and now Mike had to try and recall the entire movie in his tipsy state.

"How?" He asked Will. "Well, Lucas is like the athlete, Andy. I'm like Brian, the brain. You're like Bender ---" "How the hell am I like Bender?!" Mike exclaimed, sounding offended. "You're loud and moody. Eleven's like Allison, weird and different from all of us." Will paused, opening his eyes as Mike ran his hands through his own choppy curls.

"And Max is like Molly Ringwald." Will finished. "No way! Max is not Molly Ringwald. She -- No way. They both have red hair, big deal. That doesn't make them the same character." Mike insisted, shaking his head. Will got quiet for a minute.

"She's only ever tried to be your friend. She really likes you, you know? I don't get why you're so mean to her all the time." Will couldn't hold back in his current state, even if he wanted to. "I'm not mean to her. She's just annoying. That's how we are." Mike defended.

"You're my best friend, Mike. It's like, I see why she had such a big crush on you. I like you, too, Mike. I get why she did." Will confessed. Mike practically ignored what he said, eyebrows furrowing together. "Max liked me? She had a crush on me?" Mike asked.

Will, of course, in the middle of pouring his drunken heart out, would get cut off.

"Uh, oh, uh. Yeah. In like, eighth grade. But you loved Jane and then I guess Max moved on to Lucas." Max and Lucas broke up before ninth grade, no embarrassed by the fact that they ever dated.

"And I -- I always liked you, Mike." Will added. Mike looked ready to have a little meltdown, racking his brain for practically every conversation he ever had with the red haired girl. How could he miss that?

"You're my best buddy, too, Will. Uh, how 'bout I get Max to drive you home? You look kinda sleepy." Mike suggested, sitting up before Will could even respond. Though Will did appear ready to puke his brains out, Mike also needed an excuse to get out of this conversation.

"Max! Max, hey!" Mike called into the party. He couldn't find her from outside the crowd, so he had to get in. He squeezed through dancing party goers, calling her name over the music.

"There you are! You missed your favorite song!" Dustin clapped him on the back. Max was right there beside him, shuffling and swaying with the music awkwardly. Of course, she couldn't dance. It was kind of cute.

"Max! Max, you've gotta drive Will home." Mike told her once he got close enough to her ear. "He's probably gonna pass out." He added. "Oh, great. Does anybody else need a ride home?" Max called to their party.

"I'm walking Jacee home later." Lucas told her, both his arms wrapped around his laughing dancing queen. "I'll crash here tonight. I'm not done with this joint!" Dustin said. Then Max and Mike made their way back to the bedroom to get Will.

Mike helped get Will down the block to where they had parked Max's jeep. "Max is gonna drive you home, buddy." He told his best friend, buckling the seatbelt for him before he shut the passenger side door.

"You sure you don't need a ride home?" Max asked, the light from the streetlamp reflecting against her face just right. Pretty. Mike thought. Yeah, she was kinda pretty.

"Yeah, I'm not done over here. I'll walk home later." Mike told her. He watched her get in the car, put a cassette in the tape deck (Joan Jett and The Blackhearts. What a fuckin' surprise.) and watched her drive off singing Crimson and Clover as loud as she could.

As soon as they were out of sight, Mike started his walk home. He was only a few blocks from his weird household. Holly was probably asleep. His dad was probably on the basement couch, sleeping. His mom was probably in the bath or on the telephone. He saw Nancy at the front door when he reached it.

"Hey. How was the party?" She asked him, unlocking the front door. "It was boring." Mike answered, though his mind was racing. "What movie did you see again?" He asked his sister. "Dirty Dancing. Mom would've loved it." She shrugged, walking inside. "Night." She added before going upstairs to her bedroom.

Mike sat on the couch for a few minutes. How long did Max like him for? Why didn't he notice it until now? Did she always look that nice? Why didn't he notice how pretty she looked until now? Did she bitch at him because she didn't know how to express how she really felt? Or did she really enjoy bitching at him? Would they have made a good couple? Did she still like him? Should he ask her out? Did he even like her?

Mike shook his head. He was just about to go upstairs to his bedroom when he heard the loud music of Guns-N-Roses booming outside. Max's jeep was sitting in his driveway. It took him a moment before he decided to go outside, turning the floodlights on so he could see her.

"Hey." He greeted, seeing Max through her car window. "Hey." Max repeated, lowering the music. "Did Will get in okay?" He asked. Max

opened the driver's side door, sliding out. Mike took a step back, watching her hop on the hood of her Jeep. "Just fine. Hopper helped me tuck him in. He was doing a lot of talking." Max answered.

"Yeah, he gets like that, I guess. He was telling me a lot." Mike admitted, hopping up on the hood beside her. "I know. He wouldn't shut up about you." Max shook her head. "And apologizing to me. I, uh, I guess he told you, huh?" Max looked down at her shoes. Mike bumped his knee against hers.. "I -- Yeah. I didn't know you liked me, Max. Honest. I had no idea." He told her. Max gave him a funny smile.

"Why would you notice? You were so focused on Jane. You just thought I was annoying." Max said. "You are annoying." Mike reminded her. Max kicked his long like with her food. "Screw you, Mike." She told him, but neither of them had moved.

"Do, um. Do you still like me?" Mike asked after a silence between them.

"No. No, I don't like you like that at all anymore." Max let out a breath, staring straight ahead of her.

So if I asked you out right now, you'd say no, right?" He looked over at her. Max pushed her hair out of her face. "I said I don't like you like that anymore, Mike. I would say no." She told him. Mike leaned back against the hood and the windshield.

"Do you think we would've made a good couple? If things were different?" He asked as she leaned back beside him, cushioning her head by her arms folded behind her. "I think we would've ripped each other's heads off in a week." She looked up at the stars. Mike let out a laugh. "Yeah. You're probably right about that." And it got quiet again.

"Billy's moving to New York City with Angela. She's got friends there or something like that. He left me another voicemail. I think he thinks I'm gonna call him back one day. Like leaving voicemails and giving me updates about his life is going to make me forgive him for all the shit he did to me. To us." She said quietly. Mike glanced at her. "You should change your phone number." He said.

Max slid off the hood after silence hit them yet again. "You should call Will. He's got a lot to tell you." Max started towards the driver's seat. "Like what? He tells me everything?" Mike asked, confused as he slid off the hood. Max got into the driver's seat, starting up the truck. "Like, how he's in love with you and how he's been in love with you for like, ever." She told him.

"Wait, what?" Mike shook his head, eyes widening in confusion. "Call Will. I'll catch you on the flipside, Mike!" "See you in the upside down." Mike called after her, watching her drive away before heading back inside his house.